

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 3 through 5 and 7 through 15 are pending in this application. The Office Action objects to claims 6 through 8 and 10 through 14 but allows these claims if rewritten into independent form.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,621,640 to Ohno et al. (hereinafter "Ohno"). Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of cancelled claim 6 of the third filter comprising an outer frame disposed in close contact with a boundary of a discharge portion of the dust collecting casing; and a non-woven fabric provided at the outer frame, defining a fluid passage through which the air is discharged from inside of the dust collecting casing to the outside and at the same time filtering minute particles from the air passed through the second filter. Ohno fails to disclose or suggest these features of claim 1. Claims 3 and 9 depend from claim 1 and, thus, are also not anticipated by Ohno.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3 through 5 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0205926 to Fawcett (hereinafter "Fawcett"). Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of cancelled claim 6 of the third filter comprising an outer frame disposed in close contact with a boundary of a discharge portion of the dust collecting casing; and a non-woven fabric provided at the outer frame, defining a fluid passage through which the air is discharged from inside of the dust collecting casing to the outside and at the same time filtering minute particles from the air passed through the second filter. Fawcett fails to disclose or suggest these features of claim 1. Claims 3 through 5 and 15 depend from claim 1 and, thus, are also not anticipated by Fawcett.

In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully submit that all claims present in this application patentably distinguish over the cited prior art. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections of the claims. Also, applicants respectfully request that this application be passed to allowance.

Dated:

10/21/05



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